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Multiculturalism

Abstract

In the 1970s and early 1980s, there appeared to be a considerable measure of consensus in Australia on policies towards the many ethnic groups which make up the population: they were to be permitted a large measure of cultural autonomy, while at the same time special institutions and measures were introduced to ensure access and equity and participation for all Australians irrespective of their origins. These policies - referred to collectively as multiculturalism - were endorsed and implemented albeit in varying forms) by the major political parties, and appeared to enjoy broad public support. However, recent events indicate that this multicultural consensus is no longer uncontested, and that issues and policies are being redefined. This paper will look at the meaning of multiculturalism and its background in Australia's postwar migration program. It will then examine various aspects of multiculturalism in State and Commonwealth Government policies.



THE CENTRE FOR
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Multiculturalism

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MULTICULTURALISM

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Multiculturalism

1. Introduction

In the 1970s and early 1980s, there appeared to be a considerable measure of consensus in Australia on policies towards the many ethnic groups which make up the population: they were to be permitted a large measure of cultural autonomy, while at the same time special institutions and measures were introduced to ensure access and equity and participation for all Australians irrespective of their origins. These policies - referred to collectively as multiculturalism - were endorsed and implemented (albeit in varying forms) by the major political parties, and appeared to enjoy broad public support. However, recent events indicate that this multicultural consensus is no longer uncontested, and that issues and policies are being redefined. This paper will look at the meaning of multiculturalism and its background in Australia's postwar migration program. It will then examine various aspects of multiculturalism in State and Commonwealth Government policies.

2. What is Multiculturalism?

On 13 March 1987, the Prime Minister, the Hon. R.J.L. Hawke M.P., announced the establishment of of an Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs and an Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA). The purpose of the Council is to provide advice to the Commonwealth Government:

"...on ways in which the Government might advance its objective of encouraging the further development of our multicultural society. In recognition of the cultural diversity of contemporary

Australian society, the Government seeks to promote an environment in which all Australians, irrespective of cultural origins, can exercise their rights and obligations as full and equal members of the community. As part of this, the Advisory Council will also be expected to help the Government to ensure that its policies and programs are equitable, and its programs accessible to all members of our community."¹

The OMA, which is situated within the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, is to support the Council in this task. The Hon. Mick Young, Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, has been named as Minister assisting the Prime Minister in the multicultural affairs area.

The setting up of these bodies is the most recent development in the policy of multiculturalism, which was first enunciated by the Whitlam Government in the early 70s, and which has since been endorsed and implemented by all the major political parties. Multiculturalism has several meanings:

- First, *a descriptive statement*. Australia has included members of different ethnic groups ever since 1788. The postwar immigration program has led to settlement of many diverse communities. Australia is a polyethnic society, with a great variety of cultures.
- Second, *an ideology of the way society should be organised*. In this context, multiculturalism means accepting the legitimacy of cultural pluralism as a long-term feature of Australian society. In contrast to earlier ideas of assimilation of migrants, multiculturalism implies the recognition that ethnic communities will keep their own languages and cultures for several

generations. Cultural maintenance is seen as central to the identity of the various ethnic groups.

- Third, *a principle for social policy*. Here, multiculturalism means identifying structural factors which disadvantage or exclude members of non-English speaking communities. The role of government is to work out and implement policies which guarantee access and equity and full participation in all areas of society for all Australians.
- Fourth, *a set of special institutions*. These are designed to implement the principles of participation and access and equity. Multicultural institutions include the Ethnic Affairs Commissions in NSW, Victoria, SA and WA, the Commonwealth Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs and Office of Multicultural Affairs, mentioned above, special units within a variety of Commonwealth and state government departments, as well as a large number of multicultural services and programs.²

These four ways of looking at multiculturalism are not mutually exclusive. However, there are significant differences in emphasis among the proponents of multiculturalism, with some tending to stress cultural pluralism and identity, while others emphasise social policy and equity. These differing interpretations of multiculturalism help explain why it has been maintained as a consensus by both ALP and Liberal/National governments.

What is the difference between multiculturalism and ethnic affairs? This question is currently significant, as the Commonwealth now has both an Office of Multicultural Affairs and a Department of Immigration and

Ethnic Affairs. Similarly, three states have ethnic affairs commissions, while one - Western Australia - has a Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission, implying that the two things are not the same.

In the past, "ethnic affairs" and "multicultural affairs" have been used largely synonymously. Both have been used mainly to refer to policies concerning people of non-English speaking background, although it has been emphasised that multiculturalism is for all Australians.³ On the whole, Aboriginal Australians have not been embraced by the institutions set up as part of multiculturalism, since they are neither migrants nor "ethnics", although they have been included in attempts to combat racism. However, it has been pointed out that the popular usage of the word "ethnic" - to refer to people of non-English speaking background (NESB) - is misleading. We are all "ethnic" in the sense that we may be defined as belonging to an ethnic group, so that ethnic affairs should refer to the relationships between all the ethnic groups which make up the Australian population.⁴

The usage now developing is to take ethnic affairs to refer to the "unique problems and needs of individual cultural and ethnic groups, especially the settlement needs of those recently arrived in Australia".⁵ This implies generally that the groups concerned have minority status, i.e. they are small sections of the population, whose situation is restricted by specific barriers. Multiculturalism, on the other hand, is taken to "embrace the total environment of relations (structural as well as attitudinal) between different ethnic, cultural and linguistic groups within the Australian community."⁶ Multicultural affairs therefore concerns all Australians, including Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, people of English,

Welsh, Scottish or Irish origin, as well as migrants from non-English speaking countries. Multiculturalism in this sense is concerned with equity and cohesion within the whole Australian society, rather than with the interests of particular groups. In practice however, it is often hard to make a clear distinction between ethnic and multicultural affairs issues. The Ethnic Affairs Commissions, for example, have always addressed themselves to issues of equity and community relations which concern all Australians.

3. The Postwar Migration Program

Australia has been a country of immigration since 1788 - less than 1 per cent of the current population can trace their roots back to the Aboriginal inhabitants of the continent. Immigration has been a crucial factor in economic and social development, and often a focus of political conflict. One of the first acts of the new Federal Parliament was to pass the Immigration Restriction Act (1901), which was used to exclude non-European migrants, and became known as the White Australia Policy. Immigration was relatively low in the years of economic depression between the two World Wars, and most migrants in that period came from the British Isles. By 1947, the Australian population was relatively homogenous: 90 per cent had been born in Australia, and the overwhelming majority were of British or Irish origin.

The postwar immigration policy was a reaction to the threat of invasion during the War, and the decline of the British Empire. It was generally felt that Australia needed a much larger population than 7.5 million both for strategic and economic reasons. More workers were needed to build up manufacturing, and more families were needed to provide a viable

domestic market. The creation of a polyethnic society was never in anybody's mind. The plan was to bring in British migrants, or, failing this, others of what were referred to as "assimilable types".

Australia has followed a policy of systematic, state-controlled immigration from 1947 to the present. Altogether, nearly 6 million migrants have come to Australia, although not all have stayed. Till the early 1970s the emphasis was on large-scale recruitment of both skilled and unskilled workers, with entries ranging from 100,000 to 200,000 per year. Since then, the priority has shifted to family reunion, and to entries under refugee and humanitarian programs, with total entry below 100,000 annually. In recent months, there has been a shift back to emphasis on migration for economic reasons, with higher levels of entries.

In the 1940s and 1950s, the number of British families eager to migrate was insufficient, due to favourable economic conditions at home. Attempts were made to encourage British migration through assisted family passages, but on average Britain provided only about half the required migrants from 1947 to the early 1970s. Australia had to look elsewhere: first to Eastern European refugees, and to Northern Europeans (particularly Germans and Dutch). By the 1950s, Australia was actively recruiting unskilled and semi-skilled workers in Southern Europe. In the 1960s, recruitment was extended to the Middle Eastern countries such as Turkey and the Lebanon.

In 1966, the Minister for Immigration announced that well-qualified Asians would be admitted, provided they were assessed as able to integrate

readily in Australia.⁷ This measure had little immediate practical significance, but it did mark the end of the White Australia Policy. The Whitlam Government introduced a non-discriminatory immigration policy in 1973, according to which applicants were to be assessed irrespective of race, colour or nationality. This led to an increase in the number of skilled Asian migrants. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, increasing numbers of Indo-Chinese and Lebanese were admitted as refugees. As Australian wages fell relative to European levels, it became increasingly necessary to turn to Asia for migrants with technical skills. By the mid-1980s, over half of all new immigrants were coming from Asia. The number of New Zealanders also rose sharply in the 1980s.

4. Australia's Multicultural Population

According to estimates made by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) the total population of Australia in mid-1984 was 15.6 million, of whom 3.3 million (21 per cent) had been born overseas. This is an increase of one million in total population and of nearly 300,000 in overseas population since the 1981 Census. Table 1 (in Attachment A) compares figures for different birthplace groups in 1981 and 1984.⁸

In addition to the 21 per cent of the population born overseas, about 20 per cent of the population are Australian-born with at least one parent born overseas. Taking the "first" and "second generation" together, four out of ten Australians have close links with the migration experience.

Figures 1 and 2 (Attachment A) show the structure of the population in 1984. Over one third of overseas-born persons come from the UK and Ireland. Most other persons come from Europe, with the largest group

being the Southern Europeans (especially Italians, Greeks and Yugoslavs), followed by Germans and Dutch. Asians (including persons from the Middle East make up about 3.1 per cent of Australia's population and even the largest group - the Vietnamese - is only 0.5 per cent of the total population.

No one group makes up a high proportion of the Australian population. There is great diversity, with at least 60 different birthplace groups represented, mainly in small numbers. About 12 per cent of the population is from non-English speaking (NES) countries. This is important, as it is generally agreed that migrants from Britain and from other English-speaking countries, have fewer settlement problems. Being overseas born, or a child of overseas-born parents does not in itself mean that a person necessarily feels him or herself to be of a particular ethnicity. Nor does it indicate particular difficulties or disadvantage. However, research does indicate that certain groups have had particular problems of settlement in Australia, and that some have tended to come to occupy marginal positions. Such groups include:

- Recent arrivals, particularly from the Middle East or South-East Asia, who have very high unemployment rates;
- Southern European workers (particularly without recognised skills), who have been unable to move out of manual manufacturing jobs. This group has suffered from the effects of restructuring in recent years;
- Women migrant workers, who have often been unable to move out of poorly-paid low-skilled jobs. Many women have particularly difficult working conditions as outworkers;

- Aged persons of Southern European and Asian origin, who sometimes become isolated. There is a lack of culturally appropriate facilities for this group;⁹
- Young people of migrant origin, entering the labour market. They have very high rates of unemployment, and special training programs have not met the needs of this group adequately.¹⁰

5. The Development of Multiculturalism

Assimilationism

A large proportion of the migrant workers who helped build Australia's infrastructure and manufacturing base in the 1950s and 1960s were Southern Europeans. In this period, settlement policy was based on *assimilationism*: migrants were expected to take on the Australian lifestyle, learn to use the English language, and quickly become indistinguishable from the rest of the population. The only special measures needed were post-arrival policies, to provide initial housing (in hostels), basic English and some help in finding work. Migrants were granted all civil and welfare rights, and encouraged to take up Australian citizenship. But no long-term policies on ethnic affairs were seen as necessary, for separate ethnic identities were not expected to persist.

By the 1960s, it was evident that assimilation was not taking place. Southern European were heavily concentrated in manual jobs in manufacturing and construction. The overwhelming majority lived in the big cities, and many in particular industrial suburbs, such as Broadmeadows and Richmond in Melbourne, Fairfield and Marrickville in Sydney. Migrants were creating their own communities, and were concerned to maintain their languages and cultures. They set up schools,

social and welfare associations, newspapers and radio stations. These were all factors indicating the unplanned emergence of a pluralist society. Teachers, welfare workers and academics pointed out to the government that migrants were not assimilating, that they could and should be expected to do and that the continuation of an assimilationist policy was leading to a crisis, particularly in the welfare and education system. The call was raised for recognition of a situation of "cultural pluralism".

In the late 1960s, policies began to shift towards an emphasis on *integration* rather than *assimilation*. This meant recognising that adaptation to Australian society was not a simple and automatic process. Special social policy measures were needed to ease the transition. Migrants' desire to retain their languages and cultures was seen as legitimate, and as a useful device to ease settlement, as long as it did not prevent attainment of the ultimate goal of full acceptance of the Australian way of life.¹¹

The Whitlam Government

The real change came with the Whitlam Government of 1972-75. Al Grassby, who first became Minister for Immigration and then Commissioner for Community Relations, enunciated the doctrine of *multiculturalism* in his famous speech on "The Family of the Nation". The presence of ethnic communities was seen as an enrichment of Australia, and special measures were needed to remove disadvantages suffered by any Australians, irrespective of their origins. A Migrant Task Force was set up to examine the needs of ethnic communities. The main thrust of the Whitlam Government's policy was, however, not towards cultural pluralism but towards the improvement of welfare and

educational systems, and their adaptation to the reality of a multi-ethnic society. The Australian Assistance Plan - designed to improve and restructure welfare services - took special account of the needs of NESB migrants, and included provisions for consultation with migrant communities on their special needs. Bodies such as the Australian-Greek Welfare Society, the Italian welfare agency CO.AS.IT., the Ecumenical Migration Centre and the Centre for Urban Research and Action began to play a part in defining issues and policies.

An ethnic rights movement, embracing community organisations of all kinds was developing. This gave rise to the formation of *Ethnic Communities Councils* in all states. These linked up in 1980 to form the *Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia* (FECCA), which is the most important representative body of the ethnic communities.¹²

The Fraser Government

The Liberal-Country Party Coalition which came to power in 1975 continued the policy of multiculturalism, but with much stronger emphasis on cultural pluralism. It based its policies on four principles: social cohesion, cultural identity, equality of opportunity and access and equal responsibility for, commitment to and participation in society.¹³ The Fraser Government set up the Galbally Committee of Enquiry into Post Arrival Programs and Services for Migrants, to make recommendations on social policy. The Galbally Report of 1978 laid down principles for multicultural policies (see Attachment B), and recommended the allocation of an extra \$50 million over three years for special services.

The basic philosophy of the Galbally Report was that the needs of migrants should be met by services available to the whole community. However, until these could be made culturally appropriate to the needs of diverse ethnic groups, there was a need for ethno-specific services. One way of providing this was to give financial support through the DIEA's Grant-in-Aid-Scheme to welfare associations set up by the ethnic communities. A large number of specialised institutions were set up or expanded: the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs, the Multicultural Education Program, The English as a Second Language Program, and so on. However, there is a danger that such special arrangements can become marginalised and hence perpetuate structural barriers to the participation of certain ethnic groups, i.e. special services can be an alibi for major departments to do nothing. Because of this danger, there has been a growing emphasis in recent years on the need for change in all government services. This policy has come to be called "mainstreaming". The state Ethnic Affairs Commissions have played a leading part in this debate (see below).

The Hawke Government

Under the ALP Government, the principles and measures brought in by the Fraser Government have, for the most part, remained in force until recently. However there was an increased emphasis on issues of participation and of access and equity, influenced by the thinking of the Ethnic Affairs Commissions. Since 1985 Commonwealth departments whose portfolios significantly affected migrants have been required to make annual "access and equity statements" to the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. Measures to protect individual and

community rights have been strengthened through a range of equal opportunities and anti-discrimination legislation, with special bodies to watch over their implementation. Ethnic affairs units have been set up in various Departments, such as Health, Education and Community Services.

There was considerable debate on the merits of multicultural policies in the early and mid-1980s. This led the Federal Government to set up a Committee of Review of Migrant and Multicultural Policies and Services (ROMAMPAS), chaired by Dr. James Jupp, in December 1985 . The Committee had a broad frame of reference, and commissioned research on a wide range of aspects of the situation of migrants and ethnic groups in Australia. The Report of the Committee, entitled: **Don't Settle for Less**, was submitted to the Government in August 1986 and released in November 1986, and is likely to influence multicultural policies for some years.

The Report identifies four principles for multicultural policies (see Attachment). These lay down rights to equitable opportunity of participation in the economic, social, cultural and political life of the nation; to equitable access to the resources managed by Government; to participation and consultation concerning Government policies, programs and services; and to free use of language, culture and religion. The Report also recommends four strategies for implementation of these principles (see Attachment).

The Report made 32 specific recommendations, many of which concerned changes in the bureaucratic structure which manage programs and services, rather than major changes in the programs and services

themselves.¹⁴ Most important, no doubt, was the establishment of the Office of Multicultural Affairs, already mentioned above.

However, between the writing of the Report and its publication, the Federal Government removed some of the institutions and programs on which its recommendations had been premised. The Federal Budget of August 1986 included a number of cut-backs or changes in multicultural services: the abolition of the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs (AIMA), the merger of the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) with the ABC, cuts in Commonwealth funding for English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching and for the Multicultural Education Program, closure or reduction in size of regional offices of the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. Ethnic communities interpreted the measures as a retreat from multiculturalism, and reacted with anger and protests. In turn, the Federal Government rescinded some of the cut-backs. In view of this continuing debate, it is still too early to assess the full consequences of the ROMAMPAS Report.¹⁵

A decade and more of multiculturalism has given rise to a great variety of special bodies and policies, in all areas of government service provision. Outside government too, trade unions, churches, welfare groups and ethnic communities have established their own bodies to cater for specific needs, and to achieve the implementation of multicultural principles. It is impossible to go into detail here.¹⁶ We will present a more thorough account of the activities of the NSW Government in multicultural affairs.

6. The NSW Ethnic Affairs Commission

Development

One of the most important bodies for implementing multicultural policies is the NSW Ethnic Affairs Commission (EAC), which is a statutory body within the State Government. The EAC is the responsibility of the Premier, in his capacity as Minister of Ethnic Affairs. Mr. John Aquilina, Minister for Youth and Community Services, is Minister assisting the Premier in the ethnic affairs area. The EAC has been headed by Dr. Paolo Totaro, since it was first started as an investigative body in 1977.

The NSW EAC was the first body of its kind in Australia. Indeed its establishment was an innovation lacking any exact precedent anywhere in the world. Its first task was a review of the needs of the ethnic communities, the findings of which were published as a report, entitled **Participation**, in 1978. This document made 300 recommendations on welfare, education, employment, women's issues, industrial relations, legal matters, communications and other issues.¹⁷ **Participation** laid down a new perspective for state ethnic affairs, by going beyond the concept of multiculturalism as the mere right to preservation of the cultural heritage of ethnic groups. It called for the recognition of "the right of minority groups to achieve total participation in the Australian and New South Wales political and social systems". The Report asserted the duty of the state government to provide equal access to its services for members of all ethnic groups, and to work for equal opportunities in society as a whole.

The EAC was established as a statutory authority by the **Ethnic Affairs Commission Act**, which received assent on 27 April 1979. It recognised

the right of ethnic groupings to retain their different cultural identities while becoming an integral part of the Australian community. The objectives of the Commission, as set out in the Act are:

- to encourage the full participation of persons comprising ethnic groups in the community in the social, economic and cultural life of the community;
- to promote the unity of all ethnic groups in the community as a single society consistently with the recognition of their different cultural identities;
- to promote liason and co-operation between bodies concerned in ethnic affairs.¹⁸

The concern with issues of ethnic access and participation was to become a crucial factor of the EACs which were subsequently established in other states: South Australia in 1980, Victoria in 1982, and Western Australia in 1984. (The Western Australian body is called the Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission, and draws in issues concerning the aboriginal population more than do the other Commissions).

Structure

The NSW EAC has two main elements:

- the Commission itself, appointed by the Premier, consisting of a full-time Chairperson, a full-time Deputy Chairperson, and ten part-time members. The latter represent a variety of ethnic backgrounds and occupations;
- The staff of the EAC, at present numbering over 80 full-timers (or equivalent), plus about 300 part-time interpreters and translators.

The main office of the EAC is in central Sydney; at the end of 1987 it is due to move to Ashfield, a middle-western suburb of high migrant density. The EAC also has regional offices at Hurstville, Auburn, Liverpool, Newcastle and Wollongong. The Commission's work is supported by Advisory Committees in the Illawara, Hunter and Western Sydney area. These consist of appointees reflecting a wide range of ethnic communities. The NSW EAC's Budget allocation for 1985-86 was \$4.3 million. Altogether between 1977 and 1985-86, the State Government allocated a total of over \$26 million to the Commission.¹⁹

Functions ²⁰

Advice, Research and Liaison

The Commission is the NSW Government's main adviser on ethnic affairs. The Premier (who is also the Minister for Ethnic Affairs) receives advice either in answer to his specific requests or on the Commission's own initiatives. The Projects Section of the Commission has carried out substantial research on unemployment, various aspects of legal, educational and health reform and the situation of particular ethnic communities.

Consultations and liaison with the many groups in the State are assisted by the work of the Liaison Officers, who keep the Commission informed of various community needs and issues as they arise. The Regional Advisory Committees also support this work.

Interpreting and Translating Services

Through its six regional offices, the Commission engages 34 full-time and over 300 part-time interpreters and translators. They cover 56 languages. In 1984-85 they provided personal assistance in about 40,000 cases and translated some 20,000 pages of legal documents, information material and educational qualifications. The Commission also makes interpreters available for special activities such as trade between New South Wales and the People's Republic of China.

Overseas Qualifications Counselling

In March 1979 the Commission established Australia's first overseas qualifications service to counsel overseas trained persons on how to obtain recognition of their qualifications in this country. It has counselled over 5,000 people on how to have their qualifications accepted in New South Wales and has advised the Government on bridging courses to facilitate accreditation. The Ethnic Affairs Commission was instrumental in the setting up of a Commonwealth/State inquiry (the Fry Committee) into the recognition in Australia of overseas qualifications in 1982. The findings of the Fry Committee have yet to be fully implemented, and there is a need for greater effort and resources in this area.²¹

Information and Publicity

The Commission has established a Resource Centre on migration-related material. It now includes a library with several hundred books, reports and videos. The Centre lends its material to the public. Video, sound recording and film-screening facilities are lent to approved organisations. The Commission distributes its periodical *Ethnos* and occasional papers throughout Australia and overseas. It regularly publishes monographs on

topics of interest to Government and other organisations involved in multicultural and ethnic affairs.

Funding

The NSW Government financially supports ethno-specific organisations and also general community bodies which service ethnic communities. The Government provides this funding not only through the Ethnic Affairs Commission but also through the Department of Youth and Community Services, the Ministry for the Arts, the Department of Environment and Planning and several other bodies.

Direct grants given by the Ethnic Affairs Commission from 1976 to 1985 have totalled over \$6.3 million. Examples of funding by the Commission are:

- The Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW, an umbrella organisation of ethnic groups receives yearly grants which have amounted to over \$524,000 since 1978;
- The Commission's Welfare Grants Program aims to provide "seeding" funding - usually to subsidise the salary of a welfare worker. Grants have gone to organisations of newly settled communities (for example, from Latin America, Indochina and the Middle East) as well as established communities such as the Polish and the Greek;
- The Commission's Cultural Grants Program assists ethnic art groups with small grants. These grants sometimes supplement assistance

given by Commonwealth and State arts funding bodies. Through the Commission, the Premier makes special awards each year to writers and poets who present experiences of migrants in a new land;

- Funding for ethnic schools in NSW also comes from the Commission's budget, although administered by the Ministry of Education.

7. Other Multicultural Policies of the NSW Government

The official view in NSW is that services for members of non-English speaking background should not be concentrated in special "ethno-specific" institutions. Rather the Government aims at the "mainstreaming" of multicultural policies, i.e. they should be realised in all areas of service provision. This has led to a number of initiatives, which can only be dealt with briefly here.

Ethnic Affairs Policy Statements (EAPS)

In 1984, the NSW Government directed its Departments and authorities (excepting those with no direct public service function) to prepare Ethnic Affairs Policy Statements (EAPS) aimed at ensuring that Government services are accessible to all people in the State and are appropriate to a multicultural society.

Several factors may in practice prevent people of non-English speaking background from benefiting from services provided by the Government:

- They may not know about the services that are available to them;
- Because of language or other barriers, they may not be able to use the services;

- There may be discrimination in the delivery of services;
- Services may not be able to respond appropriately to people's cultural backgrounds.

The Ethnic Affairs Policy Statements cover services at the point of delivery, and also all of those other functions which affect service provision - publicity and information, planning, policy-making, research and staff training. Each departmental EAPS is meant to address these issues, firstly by conducting a thorough review of current operations, in order to identify barriers to equal access to people of non-English speaking background. The Statements incorporate goals which specifically identify the steps needed to ensure equality of access. They also outline detailed strategies for departments/authorities to follow.

Each department/authority is required to report annually to the Ethnic Affairs Commission so that the implementation of strategies can be monitored and the achievement of goals assessed. EAPS do not cover employment issues, since they form part of Equal Employment Opportunity policies.

The NSW Government intended each department and instrumentality to submit an EAPS by the end of 1984. There were considerable delays, but most bodies had complied by mid-1986. The NSW EAC has put considerable resources into supervising and monitoring this process and is currently extending it to local government. However, it is difficult to say how effective the EAPS have been in actually changing institutional structures and the way services are delivered. In some cases they may

remain mere verbal declarations of intent, without leading to significant action.

Equal Employment Opportunity

The Wran Government established the Office of the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment. All Government departments, authorities, universities and colleges of advanced education have developed equal opportunity (EEO) management plans. These aim to identify and eliminate discriminatory practices, policies and procedures, and develop strategies aimed at achieving equality of opportunity for women, people of non-English speaking background, Aborigines and the physically impaired.

Anti Discrimination Measures

The NSW Anti-Discrimination Board has been set up in accord with the 1977 Anti-Discrimination legislation. A staff of bilingual Conciliation Officers handles complaints of racial discrimination, who attempt to achieve negotiated settlements. The Board also provides publications and training on anti-discrimination and EEO issues.

Education

An Advisory Committee on Multicultural Education and Ethnic Affairs was set up by the Minister of Education in 1981. It includes representatives from the community. The Education Department issued a Multicultural Education Policy Statement in 1979, which was updated and revised in 1983. The aim is to introduce multicultural principles in all areas of education, as well as to provide special programs targetting particular areas of need, such as the English as a Second Language

Program (funded jointly by Commonwealth and State). Clearly, education is one of the most important areas of multiculturalism, and cuts in special programs have provoked very strong reactions from ethnic communities. There is no space here for a detailed discussion of the many programs and services,²² nor for an examination of the success in changing education to meet the needs of a multicultural society.

Other Areas

Other areas of NSW Government in which special measures have been introduced to take account of the multicultural nature of our society include:

- Health;
- Welfare;
- Justice and legal services;
- Police;
- Industrial Relations and Employment;
- Women's issues;
- Sport and Recreation;
- Consumer Affairs;
- Arts and Culture;
- Youth.

It is impossible to attempt to summarise the various measures in all these areas.²³ Their great variety does give some indication of the problems involved in trying to shift the basic philosophy of service provision from a mono-cultural one, based on British traditions, to a broader-based one, taking account of the needs and aspirations of a diverse population. Despite all the efforts made, many ethnocentric structures remain untouched. There is still a long way to go.

8. The Politics of Multiculturalism

Recent events indicate that the multicultural consensus of the 1970s and early 1980s is no longer uncontested in the public arena. The debate initiated by Prof. Blainey's statements on immigration in 1984 indicated that there is an important undercurrent of rejection of a non-racist immigration policy in Australian society. Prof. Blainey's attack on Asian entries was supported by Bruce Ruxton of the Victorian Returned Servicemen's League (RSL), who has continued more recently with an onslaught on immigration of black Africans. The debate has widened into an attack on multiculturalism, with considerable media airing through such articles as David Barnett's "Dividing Australia" in **The Bulletin** (18 February 1986) and Des Keegan's regular "National Affairs Column" in **The Australian**. On a more serious academic level, some recent research has questioned the need for special multicultural programs and services, asserting that migrant disadvantage is "a myth".²⁴

Multiculturalism had developed in a situation in which most people accepted that immigration had contributed to economic growth and improving living standards. The relatively favourable fiscal situation eased the introduction of multicultural institutions and measures. By the early 80s, this leeway was gone: severe economic difficulties made many people question the benefits of immigration, and the level of state spending in the multicultural area. At a local level in working-class areas, competition for jobs and welfare resources has created conditions in which people perceived as "outsiders" may be scape-goated.

In the run-up to the Federal Budget of 1986, some politicians and officials seem to have felt that cuts in the multicultural area would meet with little opposition, and might indeed receive public support. There seems to have been some surprise at the strength of the reaction to these cuts in the ethnic communities. The mobilisation of ethnic groups, particularly against the ESL cuts and the SBS merger, led the Government to reconsider these moves. There has been a widespread discussion on the political significance of the "ethnic vote". In February 1987, the Hon. Chris Hurford was replaced as Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs by the Hon. Mick Young, who is also President of the Federal ALP. The Permanent Secretary of the DIEA, Mr. Bill McKinnon, was also replaced. In a major speech on multicultural policies on 26 April 1987, the Prime Minister announced that the plans for merging the SBS and the ABC had been abandoned.

Multicultural affairs are clearly in a state of flux at present. It appears that the Government is now going to considerable lengths to allay fears within the ethnic communities, and to reassert the commitment to multiculturalism. The bottom line is no doubt the issue of the "ethnic vote". Nobody is certain whether there is such a thing, for ethnic communities are diverse in their economic and social structure. It is unlikely that, say, Greeks or Hungarians vote in blocks based on ethnicity. But it does appear that measures seen as hurting the interests of non-English speaking people, like the cuts in ESL funding in 1986, may provoke a move away from the party responsible. In marginal seats, this swing could be sufficient to determine the outcome of elections. The ethnic diversity of the Australian population has hence become an

important political factor, and is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. Multiculturalism is here to stay.

¹ Prime Minister's Media Release of 13 March 1987.

² For a comprehensive overview see: Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, **Don't Settle for Less - Report of the Committee for Stage I of the Review of Migrant and Multicultural Programs and Services**, Canberra, AGPS, 1986.

³ See Australian Council on Population and Ethnic Affairs, **Multiculturalism for all Australians - Our Developing Nationhood**, Canberra, AGPS, 1982.

⁴ One of the problems of ethnic affairs is that "ethnic group", or "ethnicity" are basically subjective concepts. People form an ethnic group, or have a shared ethnicity, because they feel that they share common cultural, historical, and other characteristics. But many people do not have any feelings on ethnicity, one way or the other. So the question in ethnic affairs is how are ethnic groups to be defined, and who is going to do the defining?

⁵ Speech by Dr. Andrew Theophanous, on behalf of Mr. Mick Young, at the Conference "Whither Multiculturalism", La Trobe University, 4 April 1987.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ **Don't Settle for Less**, p. 23.

⁸ At the time of writing (May 1987) figures from the 1986 Census are not yet available).

⁹ Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs, **Ageing in a Multicultural Society**, Melbourne, 1985.

¹⁰ Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs, **Reducing the Risk - Unemployed Migrant Youth and Labour Market Programs**, Melbourne, 1985.

¹¹ **Don't Settle for Less**, pp. 29-31.

¹² Ibid, pp. 31-34.

¹³ **Multiculturalism for All Australians**.

¹⁴ See **Don't Settle for Less**, pp. 345-353.

¹⁵ An attempt to assess the significance of the Report was made at a seminar held at the University of Wollongong from 1-2 December 1986. See: Centre for Multicultural Studies, **ROMAMPAS Seminar Report**, Wollongong, C.M.S., 1987.

¹⁶ A comprehensive account is to be found in **Don't Settle for Less**.

¹⁷ NSW EAC, **Participation - Report to the Premier**, Sydney, 1978, 2 Vols.

¹⁸ Quoted here from NSW Government, **A Decade of Achievement in Ethnic Affairs 1976-85**, Sydney, NSW EAC, 1985.

¹⁹ **A Decade of Achievement...** p. 3.

²⁰ The following account is based mainly on **A Decade of Achievement...** and the **Annual Reports** of the NSW EAC.

²¹ See **Don't Settle for Less**, pp. 108-111.

²² **A Decade of Achievement...** , pp. 12-17, lists the programs and services in this area.

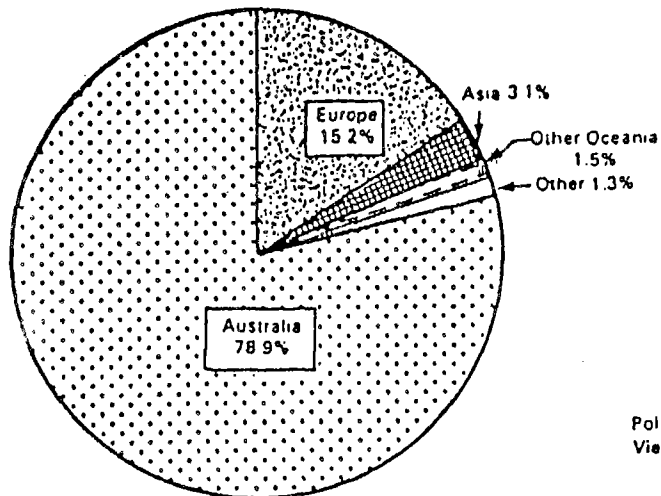
²³ See **A Decade of Achievement...**, pp. 16-24.

²⁴ See for instance: R. Birrell and A. Seitz, **The Ethnic Problem in Education: The Emergence and Definition of an Issue**, Paper for the AIMA Research Conference, Melbourne, 1986.

Attachment A

POPULATION OF AUSTRALIA
BY BIRTHPLACE, 30 JUNE 1984

FIGURE 1.



Source: ABS, Catalogue No. 3221.0, 1985.

OVERSEAS-BORN POPULATION OF AUSTRALIA
BY COUNTRY OF BIRTH, 30 JUNE 1984

FIGURE 2.

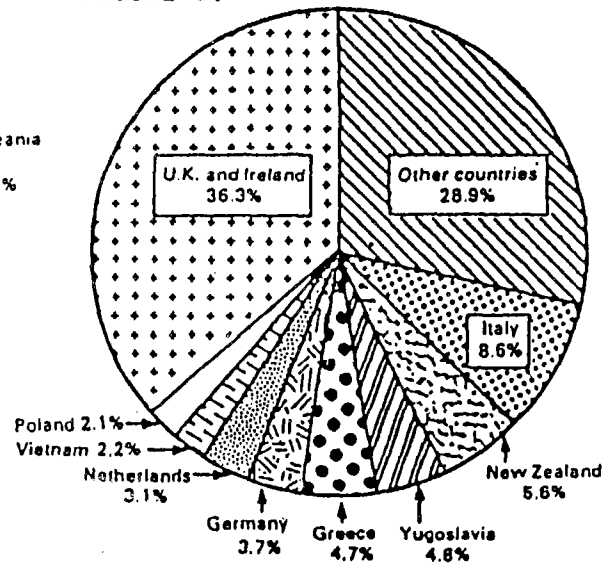


TABLE 1: Australian Population: Selected Birthplace Groups 1981-1984

Country of Birth	1981 Census		June 1984 (estimates)	
	thousands	per cent	thousands	per cent
Australia	11,394	78.2	12,271	78.9
Europe (total)	2,233	15.3	2,363	15.2
of which:				
UK and Ireland	1,133	7.7	1,193	7.7
Italy	276	1.9	282	1.8
Greece	147	1.0	154	1.0
Yugoslavia	149	1.0	158	1.0
Germany	111	0.8	121	0.8
Netherlands	96	0.7	103	0.7
Asia (total)	372	2.5	481	3.1
of which:				
Vietnam	41	0.3	73	0.5
Lebanon	50	0.3	56	0.4
India	42	0.3	47	0.3
Oceania (total)	212	1.5	226	1.5
of which:				
New Zealand	176	1.2	183	1.2
Africa (total)	90	0.6	106	0.7
America (total)	96	0.7	108	0.7
Overseas born (total)	3,003	20.6	3,285	21.1
Not stated	179	1.2	-	-
TOTAL	14,576	100.0	15,556	100.0

Source: ABS, Catalogue 3221.0, 1985 and 1981 Census.

Attachment B

Galbally Report 1978 - four guiding principles

- (a) all members of our society must have equal opportunity to realise their full potential and must have equal access to programs and services;
- (b) every person should be able to maintain his or her culture without prejudice or disadvantage and should be encouraged to understand and embrace other cultures;
- (c) needs of migrants should, in general, be met by programs and services available to the whole community but special services and programs are necessary at present to ensure equality of access and provision;
- (d) services and programs should be designed and operated in full consultation with clients, and self-help should be encouraged as much as possible with a view to helping migrants to become self-reliant quickly.

Source: Galbally, Frank (Chairman), **Review of Post-Arrival Programs and Services for Migrants**, Canberra, AGPS, 1978.

Recommendations of Report of the Committee for Stage 1 of the Review of Migrant and Multicultural Programs and Services

1. The development of Federal Government policies should be guided by the following principles:
 - a) all members of the Australian community should have an equitable opportunity to participate in the economic, social, cultural and political life of the nation;

- b) all members of the Australian community should have equitable access to and an equitable share of the resources which governments manage on behalf of the community;
 - c) all members of the Australian community should have the opportunity to participate in and influence the design and operation of government policies, programs and services;
 - d) all members of the Australian community should have the right, within the law, to enjoy their own culture, to practise their own religion, and to use their own language, and should respect the rights of others to their own culture, religion and language.
2. The strategy pursued by the Federal Government in assisting overseas born residents and their families to achieve their equitable participation in Australian society should contain the following elements:
- a) measures to equip people born overseas and their families with the basic resources which they require to function effectively and on an equitable basis in Australia;
 - b) measures to achieve institutional change, so as to ensure that the organisations which make decisions about programs and services, and which implement them, do so in an equitable manner;
 - c) measures to promote good community relations, that is, social attitudes and behaviour which respect the rights of all; and
 - d) measures to support the opportunity for people to maintain, enjoy and develop their cultural heritage and identity.

Source: Don't Settle for Less - Report of the Committee for Stage 1 of the Review of Migrant and Multicultural Programs and Services, Canberra, AGPS, 1986.